



News Release

Communications New Brunswick

New Brunswick Human Rights Commission

Human Rights Commission releases annual report (06/12/13)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) - The 2005-06 annual report of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission has been released.

"Our statistics show that people still struggle to have their human rights respected in New Brunswick," said Gordon Porter, commission chair. "We have made a lot of progress in our province, but individuals still suffer from harassment and discrimination."

In 2005-06 the commission received 205 complaints, a slight increase over the previous year. The most common grounds of prohibited discrimination were physical disability (30 per cent) and mental disability (16 per cent). Most complaints were employment-related (77 per cent).

A total of 248 complaints were closed, a 28 per cent increase over the previous year. They were disposed as follows:

- 95 were settled, 28 through early mediation;
- 88 were dismissed;
- 49 were withdrawn or abandoned;
- 12 were found to be outside the commission's jurisdiction;
- three were closed because the respondent could not be located; and
- one was dismissed by a board of inquiry.

The total value of the settlements was about \$1.3 million.

In 2005-06 the Human Rights Commission worked in partnership with the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission and the Employment Standards Branch of the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour to develop three publications concerning the right of employees to return to work after a workplace accident or various types of leave.

The 2005 Human Rights Award was presented to Guy LeBlanc of Saint-Antoine. Despite being partly paralyzed by polio at the age of seven, LeBlanc undertook a 35-year career as a teacher. He helped establish the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons, was its first chairperson, and was active on several committees that promoted human rights issues.

"We are pleased by our achievements this year," Porter said. "The commission worked hard to improve the complaint process and to clear out the backlog of files. By year's end most of this work had been

completed, and the commission is now able to do more activities related to education and prevention.

"One of the messages that we want to get out is that human rights are not simply a question of fairness. They are closely tied to some of our key economic issues, such as keeping our businesses profitable, making the best use of our human resources, and attracting and retaining immigrants.

"We need to do more and do better to promote equality in our province, and we need to enlist New Brunswickers in this effort. We invite businesses, departments and groups to work with us to advance human rights, because they are a fundamental question of fairness, and also because they provide some of the answers to the key questions about our future."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Printed copies of the 2005-06 annual report may be obtained by calling 1-888-471-2233. Electronic copies are available at the annual report website. MEDIA CONTACT: Francis Young, New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, 1-888-471-2233.

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